

THE SCEPTRE

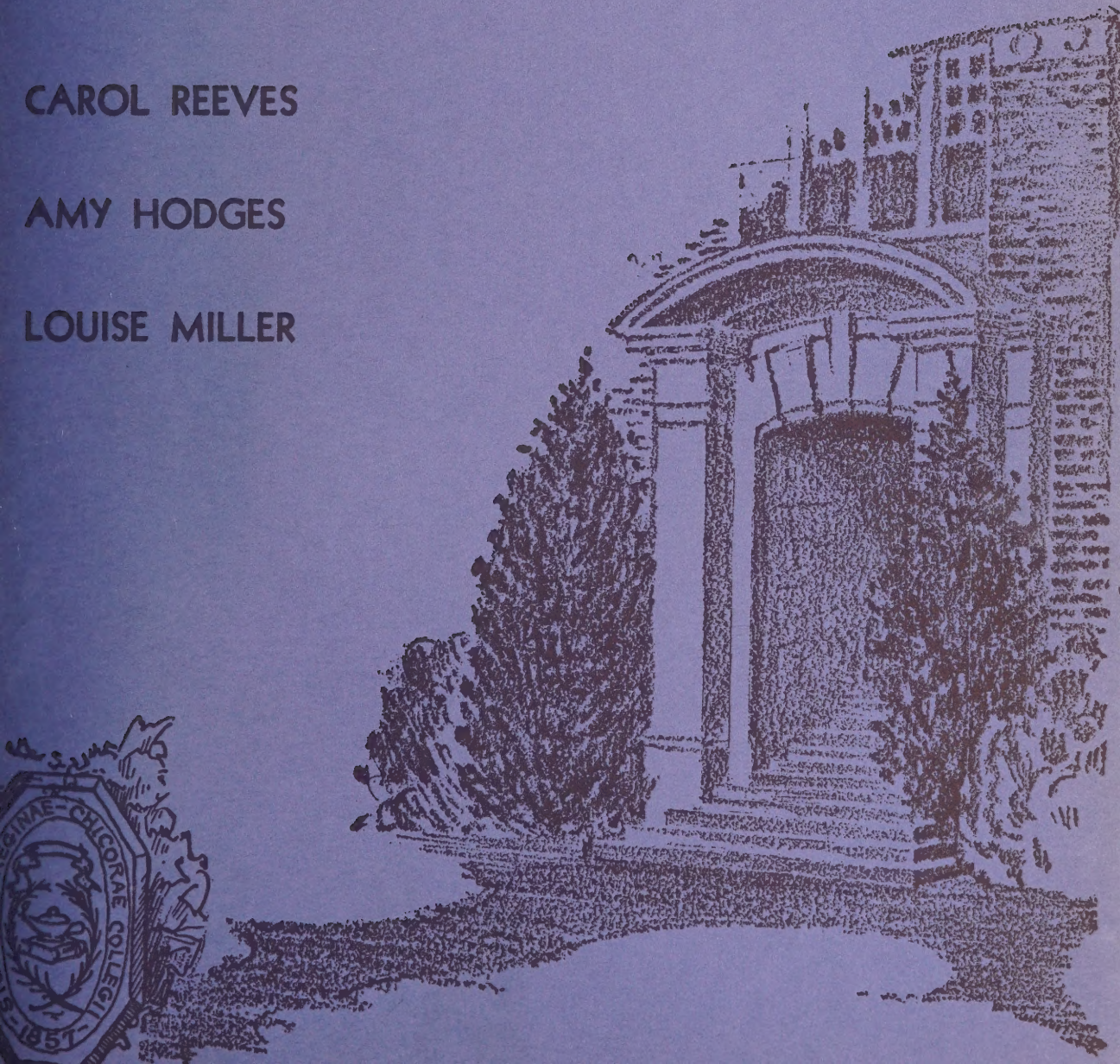
MARCH

1933

CAROL REEVES

AMY HODGES

LOUISE MILLER



The SCEPTRE

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"Words, words, words"—How prone we are to express ourselves with the words of our lips and not the meditation of our hearts. Glibly we repeat creeds and formulae. Phrases, pregnant with meaning, fall meaningless, senseless, from unheeding tongues. When asked what we believe or think of a subject, our replies are ready-made for us, or served up from the skim of our consciousness—phrases which seem appropriate—phrases which say what we think we should say. Do we stop to consider that creeds of belief are utterly useless—a sacrilege—unless they express what we consciously are trying to be, as well as profess? We must at least attempt to approximate our ideals, lest we become the laughing-stock of passers-by.

From the student body has come this expression of the hopes, the ideals, of what a representative girl of Queens-Chicora should be. Formulated from actualities, not based upon the impossible, this creed is from us. It must be made to be us. Written on fair parchment, illuminated, and hung in a conspicuous place, it will tell the visitor what the Queens-Chicora girls believe they should be—what they believe they are. Can this creed not be written so in the lives and spirits of Queens-Chicora women that not only visitors to the college, but also those who have only vaguely heard of this college, will recognize us for what we are, the living expression of our creed?

—THE EDITOR.



CREED OF A QUEENS-CHICORA GIRL

To BE adaptable, accepting with good faith the new and the difficult.

To EXHIBIT friendliness, tact, and sympathy in her relation with her fellow students.

To CONDUCT herself as a true sports-woman in all situations.

To BE Sincere in all things.

To OBSERVE neatness, modesty, and good taste in dress.

To CONDUCT herself as a gentlewoman both on and off the campus.

To APPLY herself with equal diligence to work and play.

To DEVELOP her personality, making scholarship, service, leadership, and character, the goals of its fulfillment.

To THINK of God as her Maker, and look to Him for guidance.

To CONFORM to the ideals of her college socially, spiritually, and mentally, thus striving toward fine Christian womanhood.

—CAROL REEVES.

CIRCUMSTANCE

*They say that fall is sad—
And the red drip of leaves
Is loosed in whispering grief
For that which is lost.
But for me—fall is glad—
And the ragged leaves
Leap chuckling from the trees,
To flame beneath our feet.*

—CAROL REEVES.

THREE THOUGHTS

*One jonquil raised its head
And smiled through mud and snow.
So trite? Perhaps.
But in my heart a new-found song
Ran rapturously, ran tremulously!
So trite? Perhaps.*

*All the rhythm in the world got bound up in a river.
It flowed through frozen fields in stern iambic meter,
And leapt through rugged hills in broken cadences.
It tread the bleak monotony of hopeless plains,
And wound its way through singing marshes till
It met the surging sea; and loosed its rhythm
Back into the world again.*

*God let a sparrow break its wing against a tree.
I watched it falter, fall and lie, at last submissive—meek.
I pitied it.
God let a train run off the track and kill a man.
I did not think of it at all. I wonder why.*

—FRITZ RALEY.

Four

**Tendencies
of the
Modern
Novel**

Amy Hodges

AMONG the tendencies of the modern American novel are a growing use of realism and naturalism and an avoidance of romance, sentimentality, and idealization; the use of objectivity and of the scientific approach to character analysis through biology, psychology, sociology, and physchoanalysis; an absence of love for their characters on the part of the author; a lack of emotional understanding and a spiritual poverty, also, on the part of the author; and a growing spirit of disillusionment and pessimism.

Most of the modern American realists have set themselves the task of destroying carefully nurtured illusions about American business and social practices. The figure of the bluff, unpolished, honest, good-hearted business man that William Dean Howell portrayed in the *Rise of Silas Lapham* has been completely shattered by Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis. The small town with its dullness and provincialism has also been mercilessly attacked by such writers as Charles G. Norris, Sinclair Lewis, and Zona Gale. Theodore Dreiser has harshly attacked American materialism and American satisfaction with success grounded upon wealth. His books give a wide view of American political, financial, and social life with its unceasing energy, its hypocrisy, and its vulgarity.

Another important element in the development of the modern novel is the scientific attitude demanded of the present-day novelist. He must be not only a novelist but also a psychologist and a psychoanalyst. He must not only reveal the external acts of his characters and their apparent motives for such acts, but he must also dig down into the subconscious mind of his characters, he must take account of the effects of environment and heredity on them, and he must show how incidents of their childhood long since forgotten may vitally affect their later life. The fact that many recent novels begin with a boy or girl's childhood is the result of this tendency. Sometimes, however, the author in his desire to portray the inner life of his characters carries the elimination of external action too far and forgets that the only proof of the reality of depicted states of mind lies in external acts.

Still other tendencies of the modern novel result from certain deficiencies on the part of their authors. Many of the present day au-

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of the
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Novel

thors seem actively to hate or even despise their characters, an attitude which accounts for the lack of sympathy which the reader finds in their books. Then too, many writers lack the emotional understanding of their creations which makes their readers feel they are living with their characters, experiencing their joys and sorrows. Such novelists have a more or less hopeless outlook. They frown on romance; they lack faith in humanity; they are cynical and pessimistic. It is significant that many of the authors of the recent prize novels have written of negroes or Indians, races with which novelists still feel at liberty to be sentimental within limits and races which have their peculiar supernatural beliefs. Julia Peterkin and Dubose Heywood have given the general public a new insight into the life of the negro, while La Forge has done the same for the Indian.

Willa Cather, who in the opinion of some critics has produced the best novel written by an American woman, is partly responsible for a number of novels written in recent years which deal with the relation between the earth and those who worked in and pioneered over it and which form what might be called a Saga of the Soil. Ellen Glasgow's *Barren Ground*, Ruth Suckow's *Cora*, and Elizabeth Robert's *The Great Meadow* are other examples of this tendency.

So much for the American novel. The modern English novels of distinction have for the most part been occupied consciously or unconsciously with one main theme: the relation of the soul of man to an environment becoming more and more mechanized, a relation in the form of an adaptation or an escape. With Conrad it was escape. He went to the ends of the earth for romance yet his novels are realistic. In all of his novels and tales there is a large basis of fact. He was primarily concerned with the devious ways of human behavior and had a keen psychological insight into the lives of men. He was deeply interested in the effect of fear and shock on men's minds. He was a master of psychology though he never claimed to be such.

H. G. Wells in his attempt to deal with man's relation to a mechanized environment sought escape through making use of inventions that would bring about a millenium. His books are excellent examples of the influence of science on the modern English novel. He cherishes the idea that a new world may arise from the ashes of the old through the influences of science. Many of his novels are con-

cerned with the social and scientific speculations of his age. He used the novel as a means to deal with various social and political problems as they arose, and he dealt with them more after the manner of a journalist than an artist. In this fact lies the chief defect of his work.

Arnold Bennett dealing with the same problem would have man surrender to or make shrewd terms with his surroundings. His most important novels deal with life in the Five Towns, a great manufacturing center, and the effect of that environment on his characters. Bennett is a good example of objectivity in the English novel. He leaves nothing unsaid. In his attempt to throw over fiction the illusion of daily life as lived by ordinary men and women he has piled detail upon detail and fact upon fact, repeating over and over again the common occurrences of every day. When one puts down his latest book *Imperial Palace*, one feels that with information he gives in it one could set out to manage a hotel and make a fair success of it.

Galsworthy, in dealing with the relation of man to his environment, supports the belief that loyalty to certain ideals of conduct will solve the various social problems. His novels as he himself has said are criticisms of life. He portrays one British institution after another, points out its faults, and presents what he believes to be a method of eliminating such faults while still retaining what is essentially good in the specific institution. The *Saga* by which he is best known traces the history of a family whose leading characteristic was a love of property. In the *Saga* Galsworthy chooses the conflict between the older generation which clings to this idea and the younger generation which desires freedom above all else. His novels are important not only for their plot but also for the very accurate picture of the English family which they present during a most interesting period of revolt and transition.

Among other less important English writers are Hugh Walpole, Shelia Kaye-Smith, and William Somerset Maugham. Hugh Walpole's chief defect is the extent to which he initiates other writers such as Dickens, Tarkington, and Conrad. Shelia Kaye-Smith has given us some excellent pictures of English village life, while Somerset Maugham has given us two fine novels in *Of Human Bondage* and the *Moon and Six Pence*. *Of Human Bondage*, a story of a crippled youth's efforts to overcome his handicap and adapt himself to the

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world, is one of the best examples of twentieth century English realism. Its one fault is that it reads a little too much like a biography rather than like a novel.

By way of a conclusion to this hasty survey of the novel in England and America and some of its present day tendencies it might be worthwhile to mention out of those novelists who have been discussed those who in the opinion of such critics as James Douglas and Henry Hazlitt are most likely to survive to 2033. Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy in England and Dreiser and Lewis in America are those whom they selected for their Hall of Fame.

DISLOYAL

*You were more than a lover to me—
Were something sacred, and half divine—
Akin to sunset over the sea,
To leaves that tremble and stars that shine.*

*There was not much to attract in me—
No gift or beauty; you did not care
Enough to give me fidelity
Who cared so deeply, and could not share.*

*Alas, my Temple! I find the shrine
I entered barefoot, with bended head,
To pay that tender homage of mine,
An open courtyard, where all may tread.*

*And all men knew it, I hear, but I,
Who being a trusting fool, it seems,
Went to the Market of Love to buy
With coins of worship and faith and dreams!*

*Still, it is over. Now, to forget!
I know not whether to choose anew,
In hopes of finding loyalty yet,
Or, fond but faithless, drift on with you.*

—LOTTIE LANE JOYNER.

NOCTURNAL HALLUCINATIONS

*The house is wrapt in quiet
The silence can be heard—
A palpitating silence
That flutters like a bird
Over my bed.*

*A distant clock is striking;
It rouses curious sounds.
I lie in rigid fear
And feel my heart that pounds
Away the minutes.*

*Reverberating sounds are caught
And hurled about my room,
And strange and startling shadows seem
To stalk throughout the gloom
Of the night.*

*Imagination clutches me
With cold and ruthless hand;
The wind is someone creeping near
My hanging coat—a man!
(My gosh!)*

*I cower 'neath the counterpane then
Get an awful start—
Someone is clumping up the stairs—
But no—that is my heart.
(Poor frightened thing.)*

*I've heard that if one starts to count
Imaginary sheep
It won't be very long until
One actually falls asleep.
Don't believe it.*

*I must have counted sixty-seven
Billion million sheep
When through my windows and 'cross my floor
The Dawn began to creep.
(I still was not asleep.)*

—VIRGINIA SAMPSON.

Adoption*Carol Reeves*

THE orphanage squatted on the hill like a toothless old woman with crisped fluttering petticoats. Mrs. Jameson shuddered as the barred gates grated to behind their car. Mrs. Sessum peered through the window as they moved swiftly up the drive, narrow between precise, shadeless lawns.

"My dear—such a big place, and such big grounds. I'm sure the children must be very happy. The little dears."

But it seemed to Mrs. Jameson that the straining grass had been padded by restless feet.

As they clicked hollowly up the front steps, she stared at the fly-clustered door and thought of the night Toots had been killed and the puckered-eyed pups left in the box under the stove. They had sucked noisily at her fingers and the working of their mouths pulled strongly through her arms to her breast. The sight of this building of lost children brought the same painful tugging.

A starched matron thrust the screen wide for them. They stepped into the green-carpeted coolness of the hall. Mrs. Jameson instantly liked the woman, and the way her body flowed roundly up its stiff blue sheaf and swept whitely through the narrow neck.

She studied the two visitors as she closed the door, then spoke to Mrs. Jameson:

"Would you like to see some of the children?"

Mrs. Sessum coughed and straightened her glasses.

"Mrs. Jameson is here with me. I'm the one who is thinking of adopting one of the dears. And I should just love to see them. I want a boy, of course, blond and—"

The matron smiled.

"Yes. I know what you want. I think we have several that will do. Follow me please."

Through a sunless corridor they went, and across a funnel-like court, where several blue-frocked girl-children were playing grave hopscotch. Their dull shoes scuffed on the concrete and their casting stones clinked as they fell. The air seemed heavy with lost laughter.

But the nursery was bright with cheap curtains and the color of scattered toys.

Adoption

"This is my room," said the matron, and her eyes sprang warmly to meet Mrs. Jameson's. "I've tried to make things a little happier, you see."

"Yes, I see." Mrs. Jameson stooped and picked up one of the sprawled dolls. She smiled over its red and yellow yarn head. She understood this woman.

Mrs. Sessum uttered a clucking cry and bent to one of the little cots.

"This one—this one is my baby—"

The child watched her big-eyed, drawing back as she thrust her hands into his light curls. Her long necklace swung forward as she leaned over him and he clutched at the red bads, laughing, dimple-cheeked, in sudden pleasure.

Mrs. Sessum flushed. "See—he loves me already. I can have him can't I—can't I?" She repeated the question insistently as a child demanding an uncertain favor.

"Why—yes. He's very new here. But his kind always go fast. If you'll come down to the parlor, you can make out the necessary papers."

Mrs. Jameson left the room slowly, conscious of the eyes, wistful behind the high crib bars. They seemed like a row of tiny cages. Her own baby had loved her crib.

Downstairs she talked with the matron while her friend made excited marks on the important looking papers at the desk.

"Yes—" she was saying, "it must be intensely interesting work—." There came a light tap from the hall.

The matron turned quickly. "That's Don," she said and Mrs. Jameson knew from her liquid voice that the other woman loved this boy she had not seen.

The door swung gently in, and he stood slightly beneath the tall frame. She noted him completely at first as a person clad in gray knickerbockers and worn shirt, determinedly neat. Then her glance leaped to his face and lost itself in the greyness of his eyes. Their depth held her—and their largeness. She realized dimly that his face was thin and finely freckled, and that small, sweetly-set mouth curved oddly with the angled chin.

Adoption

The matron's voice stirred her.

"This is Don, Mrs. Jameson—our Million Dollar Boy."

"How do you do," he said, his gaze deep on her. He smiled suddenly, and she put out her hand. Her heart stilled, then beat with a bounding pain.

"Run and get the boys ready for supper, Don. It's late."

He turned to go, paused and bent quaintly, hesitantly, in a half-bow, then closed the door carefully.

"He's a dear lad. We all love him. He runs my errands and handles the young ones like a born master. I shall hate to lose him." She sighed, thrusting her hands into the large pockets of her apron. Mrs. Jameson watched her fingers slide beneath the goods, forcing the starched cloth apart. An emptiness crept over her.

"Oh," she said. "Someone is taking him?"

"No. You see—he is fourteen, and we're not allowed to keep boys over that age—girls till they reach sixteen. It's a shame, for he's such a bright one too. Of course, he'll go to work. His mother is living, but terribly poor, and he has a younger brother here also. A very sad case."

She turned to Mrs. Sessum who had risen her writing finished.

"Come back in a week and everything will be ready. Bring your husband with you. I know he will love the baby. It's such a beautiful child."

The evening shadows traced the ground darkly, and the gate scraped as they swung through it and into the whirring highway. Mrs. Jameson closed her lips against the singing of her body. She knew she would come back.

POEM

*Last night gay pixies
Clad in yellow, brown, and red,
Twirling and dipping,
Floated to their earthly bed.*

*Today—prim nurses,
Sedate, white-uniformed, cool,
Crisp in brittle white caps
Are quiet as they stand.*

*Last night
The first frost covered the leaves.*

—EVA HILL.



RAIN

*Sound of softly falling rain
On old leaves.
I love it so!
Silvery, gliding, trickling drops
On soft soil—
A faint echo.*

*Rain, with soothing powers fraught,
Stay! Caress my troubled thought.*

—VIRGINIA SAMPSON.



Among the Authors

The
Sheltered
Life

Louise Miller

THE SHELTERED LIFE. By Ellen Glasgow.
Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc. (395 pp.)

HOW could one small, innocent, girl cause as much trouble as Jenny Blair Archbald! Because of her innocence and sheltered life, three lives, her own and the two who were dearest to her, were wrecked. Innocence is usually thought of as a virtue, but Miss Glasgow has proved it can be very dangerous.

The scenes of *The Sheltered Life* are laid in a small town in Virginia during the last part of the nineteenth century through the world war. The town is in no way unusual. It is simply a typical Virginia town whose aristocratic inhabitants are conventional to the highest degree. Many of these people have been wealthy, but are now poverty stricken. In spite of their poverty, they still hold to the customs of the old southern aristocracy. Should any of these conventions be disregarded by any one of this select group, it was either kept strictly within the family or disguised so that the world never knew.

The Archbalds belong to that class of aristocratic Virginians who still have money; the Birdsongs to that class who have no money. The Birdsongs live in the wrong section of the town through necessity; the Archbalds, through friendship for the Birdsongs. All others have moved to a newer section of the town.

The main characters are General Archbald, Jenny Blair, Eva Birdsong, and George Birdsong. From childhood Jenny Blair had been protected from all dangers. She adores Mrs. Birdsong, but worships Mr. Birdsong. Jenny Blair expresses her outlook toward life, her innocence, and her ignorance in those words she says so often, "I never meant any harm." Nor does she really mean to cause any one unhappiness, least of all those two whom she loves more than any one else.

The reader's sympathies are with Eva Birdsong from the time she is introduced into the story until the end. Her beauty is always a source of unhappiness. Her entire life is spent in living up to the ideals her husband set for her and to her reputation as great beauty.

The
Sheltered
Life

Not even to her closest friend nor her husband is she ever herself. Eva Birdsong loves her husband insanely. Knowing that he is unfaithful, she is able to forgive him and to regard his unfaithfulness with a tolerance not wholly human only because she believes that he loves her more than any one else.

George Birdsong, Eva Birdsong's husband is a likeable person in spite of his great weakness in character. Perhaps he is likeable because he really tries to love his wife above every one. At times he almost succeeds but never completely.

General Archbald is a pathetic character. Because of convention, his life is ruined. Forced to marry a woman he did not love, his life is spent in being cared for by women he cares nothing for.

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